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STATE PLEASE PASS USAID FOR B HAMMINK

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SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA RESPONSE ON GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR AGRICULTURE  
AND FOOD

REF: A) STATE 123480 B) CANBERRA 1194

¶1. (SBU) The following is the written response to ref A demarche on behalf of the GOA, provided to Embassy by AusAID following our November 26 meeting (ref B).

Begin text of GOA response:

"1. The Australian Government is generally supportive of improved coordination and increased transparency in implementation of food and agriculture activities by donors and of efforts to ensure harmonised donor responses to the food crisis, particularly at the country and regional level.

¶2. Australia has already expressed its support for the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) as devised by the UN HLTF on food and has structured its own response to food insecurity around this approach. Australia thought that the small but senior HLTF performed very well in the development and presentation of the CFA.

¶3. To the extent that the Global Partnership on Agriculture and Food represents an implementation mechanism for the CFA and to the extent that it can help achieve closer coordination, improve transparency in donor activities and encourage donor harmonisation, we are supportive. In particular we support the idea of an inclusive partnership with clear links to bilateral and multilateral agencies, non-government organisations, academic institutions and the private sector. We strongly encourage an efficient approach with minimal overheads and no new headquarters. We can also see the benefits of the HLTF providing technical and administrative support to the GPAF, and possibly serving as its secretariat.

¶4. Ministerial approval would need to be sought before a definitive response could be provided by the Australian Government on membership of the GPAF. In the meantime we would warmly welcome an invitation to attend the first GPAF meeting in early 2009. We would also welcome an opportunity to discuss the proposal in more detail. Some issues we'd be interested in exploring further include:

-- what the GPAF would do and how its work would translate to action on the ground at country and regional level

-- how the GPAF would relate to the range of multilateral institutions and committees that already exist in this arena, eg. IFAD, FAO, WFP, the World Bank's GFRP, the Committee on Food Security

-- what type of commitment membership of (sic) this partnership would require."

End text of GOA response.

MCCALLUM